

REMARKS

Claims 16-27 remain in this application, claims 1-15 were previously canceled, and new claim 28 is added. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

The title is amended above and should now be acceptable.

The abstract is amended above and is fully in compliance with MPEP § 608.01(b).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings set forth in section 3 on page 3 of the Office Action are requested. The specified inconsistency associated with reference number 32 is corrected above, and none of the other reference numbers 1, 2, 44, or 65 in the locations mentioned by the Examiner in section 3 of the Office Action is used inconsistently with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4). The “veneer 1” referred to in line 7 on page 18 is described as “subjected to a dyeing process” in lines 13-16 on page 18, and designating a “dyed veneer” with reference number 1 is appropriate. The “adhesive 2” referred to in line 9 on page 18 may be “a colorless one or a colored one” as described in lines 20-22 on page 18, and designating a “colored adhesive” with reference number 2 is appropriate. The “substrate 65” referred to in line 24 on page 2 of the specification is described as “opaque” in line 29 on page 2, and designating an “opaque substrate” with reference number 65 is appropriate. The fabric of “reinforcing member 44” referred to in lines 21-22 on page 35 is described as “colored by a coloring agent of a predetermined color” in lines 1-2 on page 36, and designating a “colored reinforcing member” with reference number 44 is

appropriate. Finally, the “design layer 35” referred to in line 24 on page 31 may be identified as “a colored design layer 35” in line 5 on page 32 without causing any inconsistency in violation with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings are in order and are again requested.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings set forth in section 4 on page 4 of the Office Action are also requested. Reference number 31 is in fact used consistently in Figures 6-13 to designate the same part of the invention, i.e. a wood-based decorative article. Reference numbers 33 and 41 are similarly used consistently. Even if the same part of the invention has varied characteristics among different embodiments, 37 CFR 1.84 (p)(4) does not mandate designating that same part with different reference numbers.

It is respectfully submitted to be clear from the foregoing discussion that replacement drawing sheets are not in fact required. Withdrawal of the requirement for corrected drawing sheets set forth in section 5 on pages 4-5 of the Office Action is requested.

The veneer specified in claim 1 is now defined as being light permeable, and the objection set forth in section 6 on page 5 of the Office Action is overcome. Support for the terminology now used to define the veneer in claim 1 appears, for example, in lines 19-20 on page 13 of the specification.

Independent claim 16 is rejected, along with certain dependent claims, as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,194,310 to Lenderink. Reconsideration is requested. The wood-based decorative article as presently claimed includes a veneer formed by slicing wood and being light permeable, and a substrate,

formed of a transparent synthetic resin, joined to a rear surface of the veneer. The substrate is further defined as having rigidity and a larger thickness than that of the veneer. Support for the new limitations appearing in claim 16 may be found, for example, from line 32 on page 18 to line 1 on page 19 of the specification.

It is respectfully submitted that the limitations mentioned above serve to patentably distinguish the invention as defined by currently amended claim 16 from the Lenderink patent disclosure. The Lenderink patent is directed to a wood surfaced foldable flexible sheet. The sheet apparently has a veneer lamina 10 and a backing film 11 bonded to a rear surface of the lamina. The backing film 11, however, is thinner than the lamina, flexible, and foldable (see lines 52-56 in column 1, lines 41-44 in column 2, and claim 1, for example), and is adapted to make the sheet flexible and foldable.

The Lenderink patent fails to disclose a substrate having rigidity and a larger thickness than that of its veneer as particularly recited in claim 16, and nothing in the Lenderink patent itself or in either of the secondary references relied on by the Examiner provides motivation for modifying the Lenderink backing film 11 so as to meet the limitations appearing in currently amended claim 16.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 16 is patentable for reasons discussed above. Claims 17-27 depend on claim 16 and are patentable as well. Moreover, with respect to claim 17, although the Examiner asserts that the Lenderink material has a transparent reinforcing member 12 interposed

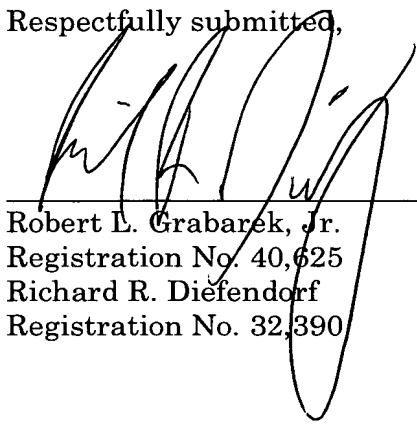
between a veneer and a substrate, it is respectfully submitted that reference number 12 in fact designates an adhesive layer for bonding the Lenderink backing film 11 to the lamina 10 rather than any sort of reinforcing member. The adhesive layer 12 corresponds to an adhesive such as that identified by reference number 2 in the present application which is clearly distinct from the reinforcing member 3. The Lenderink patent lacks a reinforcing member as required by claim 17, and fails to anticipate the invention as defined by claim 17. Motivation to add an reinforcing member as recited in claim 17 to the Lenderink sheet, moreover, does not exist, since to do so would be contrary to the Lenderink object of providing a wood surfaced foldable flexible sheet. It is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is patentable separate and apart from claim 16. Claim 18, which depends on claim 17, is also separately patentable.

New claim 28 defines the invention in terms which differ somewhat from those of claims 1-27. It is respectfully submitted that the documents relied on by the Examiner in the rejections of claims 1-27 fail to disclose or suggest a wood-based decorative article comprising a veneer, a substrate, and a transparent reinforcing member as new claim 28 particularly defines, and that new claim 28 is patentable along with claims 1-27.

This application is now in condition for allowance for reasons discussed above. If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert L. Grabarek, Jr.  
Registration No. 40,625  
Richard R. Diefendorf  
Registration No. 32,390

CROWELL & MORING LLP  
Intellectual Property Group  
P.O. Box 14300  
Washington, DC 20044-4300  
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500  
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844  
RLG:RRD:rd